

## ANCHORAGE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Anchorage\_LIO@akleg.gov 907-269-0111/ phone, 907-269-0229/fax

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME:

Gretchen Stoddard

REPRESENTING:

MAM, myself.

BILL// SUBJECT:

HSE 1

COMMITTEE &amp;

HEARING DATE:

2/7/14.

I drove from midtown work at lunch time + missed testimony. I am a Republican, South Anchorage PTA Mom. I am very concerned about my son's education.

Do not mess up my son's school. He attends Goldview.

These public testimony items that happen while my husband works, but I absolutely care about Public Schools.

Families w/ 2 working parents LOVE a school bus to the local Public Schools. Please increase the base student allocation. Please do not send the voucher proposal forward to a divisive vote. Thank you, Gretchen Stoddard 3143 Seawall Dr 99516

## LIO Mat-Su

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**From:** Melodie Wright <rewrighter@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 12:19 PM  
**To:** LIO Mat-Su  
**Subject:** testimony for HJR1

I am writing to share an opinion against the proposed constitutional amendment, HJR1.

While I am a strong proponent of school choice - all my children have attended charter schools here in the Valley and are successful - I am deeply concerned that the proposed amendment is being offered without any legislators doing their homework and finding out what, exactly, this could mean for Alaskan families. Without due diligence, there is a high likelihood of abuse by both the parents and the schools, who take voucher money and run.

What is going to be the accountability for these private/religious institutions? Shall they be mandated to take standardized testing? Will teachers be held to the same standards as their public school counterparts? What methods will the state use to ensure equity?

Will these private schools be **REQUIRED** to accept any student who darkens their doors? Because they do not currently - they pick and choose their student body via application.

Will there be an income requirement for families? Or will this voucher program only benefit the wealthy, who can afford to send their children to private schools anyway, yet not be enough money for poorer families to afford private school tuition?

What will be the impact on public schools, that already struggle with huge class sizes due to continuing funding stalemates?

Rushing forward to propose such a **HUGE** change to our philosophy - that public education is for **ALL** and includes several methods of accountability - without some idea of the impact this will have is foolish.

In my opinion, the proposed legislation is premature and requires a lot more research and conversation. If this is done, and questions are answered, I'd be all in favor of continuing such a debate.

Legislators, please try to avoid a knee-jerk reaction to a subject most of you obviously know very little about.

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/voucher-law-comparison.aspx>

Thank you.

Melodie Wright  
Palmer, Alaska

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**From:** jennifer dunn hoeger <jennydunn@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 7:35 AM  
**To:** LIO Mat-Su; House Education  
**Subject:** Public testimony regarding HJR1

This is public testimony regarding HJR1.

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing in opposition to HJR1. Changing the Constitution is serious business and I believe its writers had it right when they disallowed public dollars to go to private or religious schools. The Legislature's own research shows that school vouchers could cost tax payers as much as \$100 million per year. This is money that would be taken away from public schools. Furthermore, there is no research that shows that voucher programs improve school performance or student success. Thank you for your consideration.

Jenny Hoeger  
Palmer, AK

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**From:** LIO Anchorage  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 9:54 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** centluth@gci.net  
**Subject:** FW: House Education Committee concerning the School Choice Bill HJR1

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**From:** Central Lutheran Church [<mailto:centluth@gci.net>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 9:42 AM  
**To:** LIO Anchorage  
**Subject:** House Education Committee concerning the School Choice Bill HJR1

Dear Committee members –

I am OPPOSED to the School Choice Bill HJR1.

I believe in Anchorage and our other larger communities, we have LOTS of school choice already. We can choose from charter schools, optional programs, neighborhood schools, home-schooling, and a number of private schools (some even offer scholarship opportunities for those who cannot afford tuition through smart budgeting or prioritizing).

In our smaller communities, school choices are simply the community school, home school (but you may choose from a number of providers), or boarding school. However, this bill would not expand those opportunities in these communities.

It is my understanding that a number of private schools will show statistics demonstrating the strength of their programs as seen in student testing results ... but that if you compare students by controlling for poverty/ wealth level, exclude students with disabilities and English-as-a-second-language, and otherwise ensure a similar cross-section of students, that those same test results then show no difference between the public and private school program strengths. If we wish to see better results in our public schools, we must tackle problems including adequate and affordable housing and child hunger which will allow low-income students a solid start in school.

I firmly believe that public dollars should ADEQUATELY support our public schools. Raise the per-student base allocation, as recommended by Rep. Gardner. Please DO NOT pass the School Choice Bill HJR1 and

begin siphoning funds from public schools to private schools that are not required to serve all students, regardless of disability or ability to speak and understand English.

Thank you,

Kathleen Freeman

3189 Prescott Circle

Anchorage AK 99504

907-444-8252

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**From:** MTSB <mts@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 9:30 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** Opposition to HJR 1

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to state my opposition to the proposed legislation to create vouchers for private and religious schools. As a third generation Alaskan, raising the fourth generation, I feel strongly that the public education system is meeting the needs of our children.

The charter school programs which already exist within our public school system provide an excellent alternative to existing public school infrastructure. I have used both the charter and public school system to meet the educational needs of our children, with great success.

Please consider fully funding the existing public school system rather than diverting our resources to private entities.

Thank you for your time,  
Patricia Boyer  
Palmer, AK

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**From:** Laura Conway <laura.conway.85@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 8:34 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** SJR9 - Rural Alaskan School

Good morning,

I am contacting you as a teacher from Tununak, AK, a very small rural school in the Delta. The SJR9 legislation, while I feel is trying to do good for students, will only bring hardship and grief to our already struggling student population. Students that are able to be sent to boarding schools now do not do very well being away from family so young in their years. I worry that if funding starts to go to private/religious school, the funding small rural schools like ours will be cut and we will have to downsize or even close. Then our students will have to be sent away for school.

I urge you to please consider the ramifications of this legislation as they pertain not only to big cities and "normal" school systems, but also to the smaller villages and their schools.

Thank you,  
Laura Conway

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**From:** LIO Anchorage  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 8:04 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** dgiroux@polarservices.net  
**Subject:** FW: HJR1

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**From:** Dawn Giroux [<mailto:dgiroux@polarservices.net>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:31 PM  
**To:** LIO Anchorage  
**Subject:** HJR1

I am a 43 year Alaskan resident and a retired Anchorage School District teacher. I fully support HJR1 and I believe all Alaskans should have the opportunity to vote on this issue. I appreciate your careful consideration and I look forward to the opportunity to vote on this very important advance in the education of our Alaskan children.

Dawn Giroux



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**From:** LIO Anchorage  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 8:04 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** a2dogmum@aol.com  
**Subject:** FW:

**From:** [a2dogmum@aol.com](mailto:a2dogmum@aol.com) [mailto:a2dogmum@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 12:09 AM  
**To:** LIO Anchorage  
**Subject:**

Please vote YES on HJR1

Diane Dickey  
Anchorage, AK 99504

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**From:** LIO Anchorage  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 9:54 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** srbm1978@gmail.com  
**Subject:** FW: Bill HJR1

**From:** Stephanie Moore [<mailto:srbm1978@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 9:36 AM  
**To:** LIO Anchorage  
**Subject:** Bill HJR1

Dear Legislators,

I am in favor of allowing Alaskan's to choose which educational tract is best for their child and I hope that you will also allow the people of Alaska to do so too! Please show us that democracy is not dead and that voters really do have a choice and a voice!

Sincerely,  
Stephanie Moore

**From:** Penny Goodstein <pennygoodstein@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 8:57 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** School vouchers are a terrible idea

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I am amazed that the idea of providing public money for private schools is a serious potential in this state. I do not know the hidden agendas for this attempt to derail our public schools, but I can guess that religious education and for-profit educational institutions are two of the reasons.

If people want to send their children to private school including religious schools, then they should have to pay for them. State funds should go towards funding the public schools that have made this country great. Everyone deserves a great education and siphoning off money to pay for private schools, that even with vouchers our poorer citizens can't afford, is going to hurt our public schools. If we need more specialized schools, then supporting charter schools, that have some school board oversight and need to meet certain criteria, is the way to proceed. Provide transportation to those schools, as we already do with the special programs such as Rogers Park gifted program in Anchorage. Allow parents better access to designing curriculum in charter schools. But keep the schools public, ensure they meet certain curriculum requirements, and keep religion OUT of them.

Penny Goodstein  
Anchorage, AK

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**From:** LIO Anchorage  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 9:54 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** jabutcher@alaska.edu  
**Subject:** FW: From the Butcher's for School Choice Bill HJR1.

**From:** Joseph Butcher [<mailto:jabutcher@alaska.edu>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 8:28 AM  
**To:** LIO Anchorage  
**Subject:** From the Butcher's for School Choice Bill HJR1.

I Joseph Allan Butcher am in support of giving Alaska parents and their children the opportunity to choose which education tract is best for them. You are in favor of SCHOOL CHOICE and would appreciate a YES VOTE on HJR1.

Thank you in advance for all you are doing for us to have a choice.

~~Ruben Bosley~~

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**From:** LIO Anchorage  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 11:17 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** rjbos@gci.net  
**Subject:** FW: School Choice Bill HJR1

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**From:** RUDY BOSLEY [<mailto:rjbos@gci.net>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 11:03 AM  
**To:** LIO Anchorage  
**Subject:** School Choice Bill HJR1

Representatives,

My name is Ruben Bosley a 36 year resident and registered voter of the State of Alaska.

I reside at 2518 E. Tudor #202, Anchorage, Alaska 99507      #884-6044

I am asking you all support giving Alaskan parents and their children the opportunity to choose the education tract they think is best for them.

I am in favor of School Choice and I would greatly appreciate a YES vote on HJR1!

Thank you,

Ruben Bosley

**From:** Sarah Mittelstadt Bean <sarah@arcticorganics.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 12:13 PM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** HJR 1

To Who It May Concern:

I oppose the proposed legislation that would make vouchers available for private and religious schools.

Public money should stay in the hands of the public, and should not wind up in the hands of the religious sector.

Sarah Bean

1305 N. Smith Rd.  
Palmer, Alaska 99645

> To Whom It May Concern:

> I would like to state my opposition to the proposed legislation to create vouchers for private and religious schools. As a third generation Alaskan, raising the fourth generation, I feel strongly that the public education system is meeting the needs of our children.

>

> The charter school programs which already exist within our public school system provide an excellent alternative to existing public school infrastructure. I have used both the charter and public school system to meet the educational needs of our children, with great success.

>

> Please consider fully funding the existing public school system rather than diverting our resources to private entities.

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> Thank you for your time,

> Patricia Boyer

> Palmer, AK

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**From:** Denise Poole <dpooles3582@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 1:48 PM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** No on Vouchers or Constitutional Amendment

Even the national School Board Association is against this idea. And I certainly don't want tax dollars going to religious or private schools. We already have school choice in our public schools. See the article below. Denise Poole, Anchorage Voter

### **NSBA touts public schools as strong choices**

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is calling for public schools to be schools of choice during National School Choice Week. It is warning lawmakers not to divert funds away from public schools in favor of unproven educational experiments.

Getting lost in the hype around National School Choice Week, school voucher legislation, and calls for expanded options for low-income students is the fact that public education already offers many options—including magnet schools and district-authorized charters. Further, some states are using taxpayer-funded vouchers and tax credits as an excuse not to fund their community public schools that educate all children, NSBA Executive Director Thomas J. Gentzel said in a conference with reporters on Jan. 27.

“Public schools have a track record that we can be very proud of,” Gentzel said. It’s important to have innovations in education, he added. However, “experiments should not come at the expense of low-income children.”

Students suffer when “choice” schools go out of business, are shut down, or are allowed to continue to operate without any accountability.

In the call, Gentzel and other NSBA experts noted that:

- Not all school choice is equal: Some forms of school choice operate outside the public system with little or no oversight and accountability for student learning and fiscal stewardship of taxpayer funds. Gentzel recommended what he dubbed a “nutritional label” that would require any school that receives public funds to be required to show the same results as students in the community public schools.
- “Choice” is not a reform strategy: Research shows that the schools parents choose are more likely to be the same or even worse than the community public school they leave. Charter school successes such as KIPP Academies and the Harlem Children’s Zone are the exception rather than rule, Gentzel said, and many charter and voucher schools are performing significantly worse than traditional public schools.
- Local school boards are in the best position to oversee school choice options and hold schools accountable for student learning and finances. Gentzel noted that NSBA supports charter schools and believes local school boards understand local communities’ needs and look out for their interests. Further, according to the Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO), a major education research organization, states that empower multiple authorizing agencies are most likely to report the weakest academic results for charters.

The February issue of *American School Board Journal* discusses the regulation of charter schools and how lawmakers should build policies to avoid abuses of the system and failing schools. For example, in Columbus, Ohio, a record 17 charters closed last year for poor performance. Many of these charters had only been open a few months. Ohio allows for multiple authorizers.

Joetta Sack-Min|January 27th, 2014|

Sent from my iPad